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Chairman of the Board

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**TESTIMONY OF HECTOR GLYNN
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6634**

***AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD WELFARE AND DETENTION IN THE
JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND ERASURE OF JUVENILE RECORDS***

I am presently Vice President for Outpatient and Community programs at the Village for Families and Children., I strongly support Raised Bill No. 6634, An Act Concerning Child Welfare and Detention in the Juvenile Justice System and Erasure of Juvenile Records, and urge its amendment to address school-based arrests. Raised Bill No. 6634 will help Connecticut reduce discrimination based on race and ethnicity in the juvenile justice system, also known as disproportionate minority contact (DMC) by:

1. Requiring a court order before a child can be admitted to detention, a practice that has been specifically shown to eliminate discrimination at the point of detention admission.¹
2. Requiring state agencies to report plans to reduce discrimination in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
3. Reducing the long-term impact of juvenile justice involvement through automatic erasure of juvenile records for non-serious juvenile offenses after certain conditions are met.
4. Ensuring that kids are kept in Connecticut whenever possible, rather than sent out of state.

One of my proudest moments was when I helped change the age of juvenile jurisdiction in this state. Part of my contribution to the process was spent meeting with the leadership of the legislature that was opposed to the change. During these meetings I articulated the reasons why changing the age of juvenile jurisdiction was important. After it passed I learned from one of your colleagues that one of the reasons that people were swayed was because a "reformed gang-banger" was going around convincing people of the merits of the change. It appears that my arguments were less important than the fact that I was a Latino man with knowledge of the juvenile justice system, thus making me a "reformed gang banger". If people in this legislature can make an assumption like this, is it unreasonable that people in the juvenile justice system are also affected by the same prejudice?

Raised Bill No. 6634 contains proven, low-or-no-cost strategies to help Connecticut reduce this discrimination in a number of ways. Section One of Raised Bill No. 6634 expands a reform that has already been shown to work, requiring a court order before admission to detention, to all juveniles. Since the numbers of youth in this category are relatively small (only 300 youth a year are "serious juvenile offenders"), this is a solution with little burden on the judicial system and little to no cost. Sections Two and Three will reduce the long-term impact of juvenile justice involvement through automatic erasure of some juvenile records. Section Four ensures youth

¹ DORINDA M. RICHELLE, ELIOT C. HARTSTONE & KERRI L. MURPHY, A SECOND REASSESSMENT OF DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT IN CONNECTICUT'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM 51 (May 15, 2009); requiring a court order before admitting a child to detention was a specific recommendation of Connecticut's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, included in this report

at 51.
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are returned to their home communities in a timely manner and reduces the massive cost of out-of-state placement by requiring that kids are kept in Connecticut whenever possible. Unfortunately, the trend for out of state placements has increased over the last month,, rather than decreased as promised by the state. . Sections Five and Six ensure that state agencies are focusing their efforts to reduce discrimination and remaining accountable for that reduction.

I would also echo the suggestion of the Center for Children's Advocacy that Raised Bill No. 6634 should be strengthened by amending it to require public access to school-based arrest data. These arrests are often the first contact with the juvenile justice system for youth of color. This data is collected by the State Department of Education but not reported publicly. By making it available, it will help stakeholders target strategies to reduce these arrests to keep kids in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

Respectfully submitted,


Hector Glynn